

PLAYTIME & COMPANY



E.V. LUCAS



Bobby from

Queen Mary

1st Anecd.

Feb. 1927

rel. by Shepherd

for Julia with much love
from Susan

May, 1971



PLAYTIME & COMPANY

ENTERTAINMENTS

ADVISORY BEN
GENEVRA'S MONEY
ROSE AND ROSE
VERENA IN THE MIDST
THE VERMILION BOX
LANDMARKS
LISTENER'S LURE
MR. INGLESIDE
OVER BEMERTON'S
LONDON LAVENDER

ESSAYS

LUCK OF THE YEAR
GIVING AND RECEIVING
ROVING EAST AND ROVING
WEST
ADVENTURES AND ENTHU-
SIASMS
CLOUD AND SILVER
A BOSWELL OF BAGHDAD
TWIXT EAGLE AND DOVE
THE PHANTOM JOURNAL
LOITERER'S HARVEST
ONE DAY AND ANOTHER
FIRESIDE AND SUNSHINE
CHARACTER AND COMEDY
OLD LAMPS FOR NEW

TRAVEL

A WANDERER IN VENICE
A WANDERER IN PARIS
A WANDERER IN LONDON
A WANDERER IN HOLLAND
A WANDERER IN FLOR-
ENCE
MORE WANDERINGS IN
LONDON
HIGHWAYS AND BIWAYS
IN SUSSEX

EDITED WORKS

THE WORKS OF CHARLES
AND MARY LAMB
THE HAUSFRAU RAMPANT

ANTHOLOGIES

THE OPEN ROAD
THE FRIENDLY TOWN
HER INFINITE VARIETY
GOOD COMPANY
THE GENTLEST ART
THE SECOND POST
THE BEST OF LAMB
REMEMBER LOUVAIN

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN


PLAYTIME & COMPANY
THE SLOWCOACH
ANNE'S TERRIBLE GOOD
NATURE
A BOOK OF VERSES FOR
CHILDREN
ANOTHER BOOK OF VERSES
FOR CHILDREN
RUNAWAYS AND CAST-
AWAYS
FORGOTTEN STORIES OF
LONG AGO
MORE FORGOTTEN STORIES
THE "ORIGINAL VERSES"
OF ANN AND JANE TAY-
LOR

BIOGRAPHY

THE LIFE OF CHARLES
LAMB
A SWAN AND HER
FRIENDS
THE BRITISH SCHOOL
THE HAMBLETON MEN

SELECTED WRITINGS

A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING
HARVEST HOME
VARIETY LANE
MIXED VINTAGES



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THE VILLAGE SHOP

PLAYTIME & COMPANY

A Book for Children

VERSES BY

E. V. LUCAS

PICTURES BY

ERNEST H. SHEPARD



NEW YORK

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YOUNG AND OLD

FOR a lark or for a game,
Little friends of course are best:
Little friends who never rest,
Never worry how they're dressed,
Never care how much they tear,
Never say, "Oh, mind my hair!"
Little friends. But all the same,
When no romping's to be had,
Grown-up people aren't so bad.

Grown-up people play by ear
All the tunes you want to hear,
Know a lot of useful things
(Such as what to do for stings),
Now and then are really funny,
Nearly always have some money.
Though it's true "You mustn't do"
Is a phrase they're partial to,
Grown-up people, wrong or right,
Can't be disregarded quite.



THE GAMEKEEPER

WHILE you and I are still in bed
The keeper's on his rounds;
There's not a tree he doesn't know
Within his master's bounds;
He knows the call of every bird,
And all the woodland sounds.





To make the keeper's moleskin vest
A hundred moles have died;
The keeper's coat is velveteen,
With pockets deep and wide,
And many is the bird and beast
That finds its way inside.



Supposing we might turn them out
We'd find, perhaps, to-day,
A sparrow-hawk, an owl, a stoat,
A weasel, and a jay—
To keep the pheasants free from harm
So much there is to slay!



And though the keeper puts up boards
With "Trespassers, beware!"
And though his gun is always cocked,
He's not at all a bear,
He gave us once a pair of doves,
And once a baby hare.





THE PARK-KEEPER

IF Neptune truly rules the sea,
And keeps it clean and blue,
The man who guards our pond must be
A kind of Neptune too.

He marches round and round the brink,
Superior and bland;
But when, alas! our vessels sink
He never lends a hand.





His look is almost kind (for him!)
When ducks are fed, but when
Poor Rover ventures in to swim,
“Now then!” he shouts. “Now then!”

I can't imagine why his way
Is so across-the-grained,
With sailing races every day
To keep him entertained.





THE SWEEP

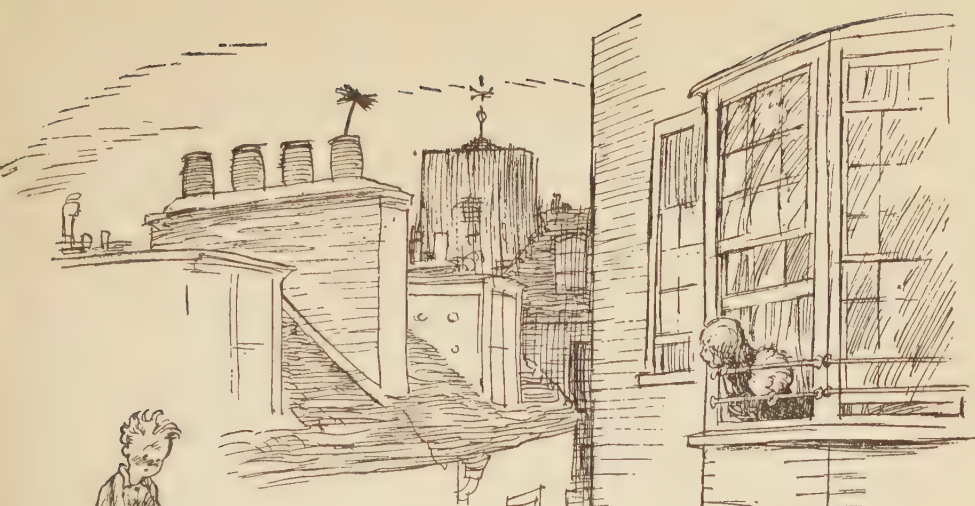
NO more a little sooty boy
The dirty chimney climbs:
Our sweeps a kinder means employ
Than under Mr. Grimes.

Indeed it wouldn't do at all
For sweeps to climb to-day;
Our chimney-stacks are built so small
They'd stick ere quarter-way.

And so a jointed rod they use,
Full twenty joints or more,
Which struggles up and down the flues,
As Tommy did of yore.

The sweep is black, except his eyes
And teeth, from head to foot—
How hard for him each morn to rise
And dress himself in soot!

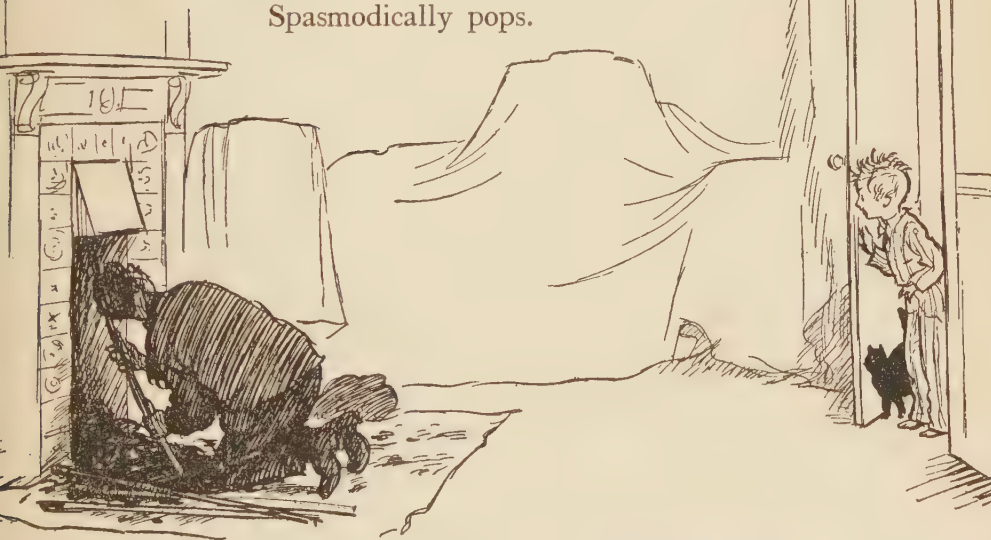




How hard for him to never see
Folks' ornaments and clocks!
For all that can protected be
Have on their dust-sheet frocks.



"The sweep!" "The sweep!" and
out we rush
To watch the chimney tops,
And see from which the fuzzy brush
Spasmodically pops.





HEROES

THE Station-master is pompous and grand,
He settles a thing with a wave of
his hand,

His coat is trimmed with the finest
gold,

And his porters do whatever they're
told.

A Station-master I'd like to be,
With no one to ever say "No" to
me.



The Driver's a man of superior type,
Who leans on the engine and smokes
his pipe,

Or sends her along, if he feels that
way,

A mile a minute to Oyster Bay;

Who sits by the fire if it rains or freezes
And blows the whistle whenever he pleases.

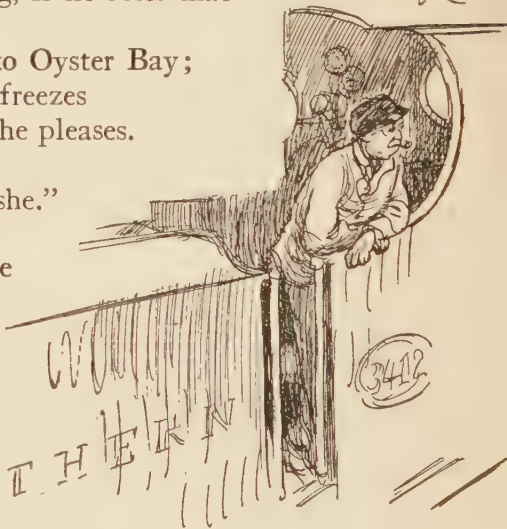
An Engine-driver I'd like to be,
And always refer to a train as "she."

The Stoker stands by the engine
fire

And feeds the flames to their
full desire,

And often he takes a lump
of coal

To throw at a goat or a frisky
foal,



He oils the engine from time to time,
 And covers himself with grease and grime.
 An Engine-stoker I'd like to be,
 Except for the bother of washing for tea.

The Signaller leans from his box on high
 And waves his hand as the trains go by;
 One pull at his handle will stop them dead,
 Another will change green lights to red.
 He's pulling those handles from morn to night,
 And it's all his doing that trains go right.

A Signaller bold I'd like to be,
 And wave my hand to the 7.3.



The Guard has a watch that is always right,
 And also a lantern to use at night,
 A flag to wave and a whistle to blow,
 And he jumps on the train when it's started to go.
 A Guard has a beautiful van to himself,
 With dogs on the floor and tea on the shelf.
 He's strong, and he's kind, and he's also willing,
 If people insist, to accept a shilling.
 A Railway Guard I should love to be—
 The life of a Guard is the life for me.





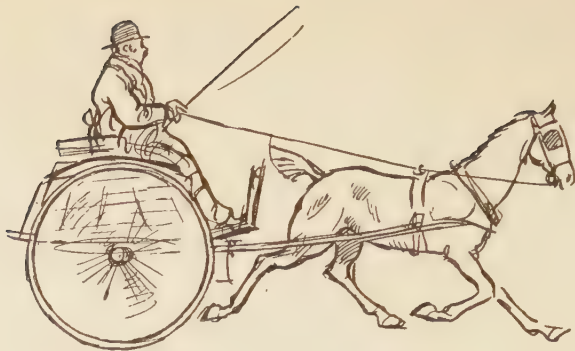
THE BARBER

SOME people make the Barber bring
His scissors and his comb,
His aprons, brushes, everything,
And cut their hair at home;
They spread a dust-sheet on the floor,
And bid Eliza guard the door.



But, oh, how tame a way is this,
And not for me and you!
For think, the whirling brush they miss,
They miss the fierce shampoo,
They miss the razor's deadly sheen,
The lovely scent of Brilliantine.



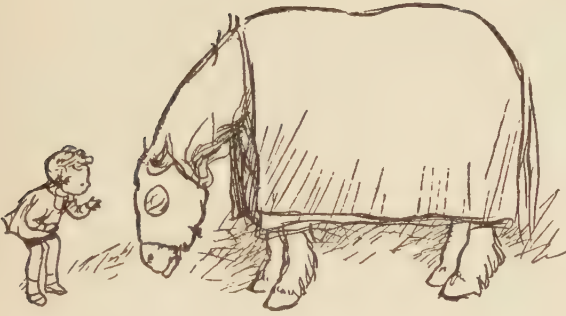


MR. POTTER, F.R.C.V.S.

WHEN Fido has a pain inside,
Or Dobbin takes a chill,
The Vet. comes in his pony cart
And mixes up a pill.

He knows exactly what to do
When animals are sick,
And Fido never snarls or bites,
And Dobbin doesn't kick.





When all of us had tried—and failed—
To dose our tabby cat,
He fixed her in a hunting boot,
And gave it her like that!





OUR COBBLER

HIS back is bent, his knees are stiff,
He has the dimmest sight;
He soles-and-heels our boots and shoes
From early morn till night;
To see him take a holiday
Would give the town a fright.





And yet there's nothing in the world
Our cobbler doesn't know;
He knows when circuses are due,
And where good mushrooms grow;
He knows how many Hobbs has made,
And when it's going to snow.

He knows why Gibson's horse was sold;
He knows the price it brought;
He knows who's taken Winsome Grange,
And how the thieves were caught;
He knows who called the doctor up,
And why those navvies fought.





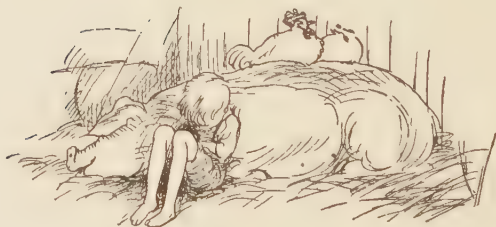
THE EMERALD ISLE

THE Irish child can dance a jig,
And share its pillow with a pig,
And where we ask for pie or meat,
The "pratie" he is glad to eat.



Now if the Irish child's a boy,
His name is Pat, or Tim, Molloy,
But if a girl, in cloak of green,
Then Norah, or, perhaps, Doreen.

From Ireland chickens come, and eggs,
And butter too in wooden kegs;
May be it is because of that
A piece of butter's called a "Pat"?





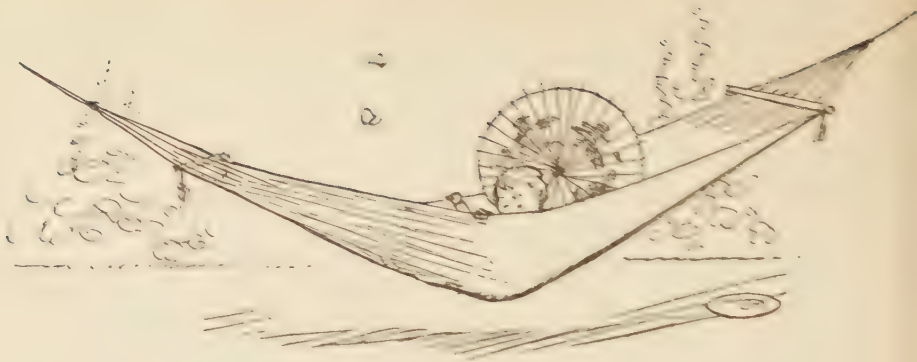
THE WELSH

THE gallant Welsh, of all degrees,
Have one delightful habit:
They cover toast with melted cheese,
And call the thing a rabbit.



And though no fur upon it grows,
And though it has no twitching nose,
Nor twinkling tail behind it,
As reputable rabbits should;
Yet taste a piece, and very good,
I'm bound to say, you'll find it.





THE ESKIMOS

IF you are fond of summer heat,
And find the sun of August sweet,
And dote on strawberries and cream,
And on the lawn delight to dream,
Or in a hammock swing at ease
Within the shade of cedar trees,
Amid the scents and murmurings
That blazing sunshine always brings—
You should be very glad, you know,
You were not born an Eskimo.
For Eskimos—poor souls!—have not
A notion what we mean by “hot.”





Among the ice they make their home,
Residing in a little dome



The very walls of which are snow,
In sealskin clad from top to toe;
They live, however much they wish
For other things to eat, on fish,

And all the fun they have is when
The dogs are harnessed—eight or ten—
And off, full tilt, in sleds they flee,
To frolic at a blubber tea.



IN NORMANDY

THE Normandy markets
Are gayer than ours,
With Normandy sunshine
And Normandy flowers.



The Normandy pippins
Like marigolds glow,
The old women's kerchiefs
Are whiter than snow.

Beneath their umbrellas
The old women rest,
And each is quite certain
Her butter's the best.

The old women's faces,
Are sunburned and lined,
But pleasant, so pleasant,
And simple and kind.

And Julian and Edward
Have played for the first time
They made their horses
They began to gallop
And they all played!





IN HOLLAND

NOW, all you little children
Who never wipe your shoes,
If you would go to Holland, why,
That habit you must lose.



The cottages of Holland,
 They are so sweet and clean,
 Not even with a microscope
 Can trace of dirt be seen.

The kitchens of those cottages,
 They are so neat and bright
 With pots and pans of polished brass,
 And plates of blue and white.

The housewives get up early,
 The housewives sit up late,
 For fear a little speck of dust
 Should wander through the gate.

So, all you little Naughties
 Who never wipe your shoes,
 If you would go to Holland, why,
 That habit you must lose.

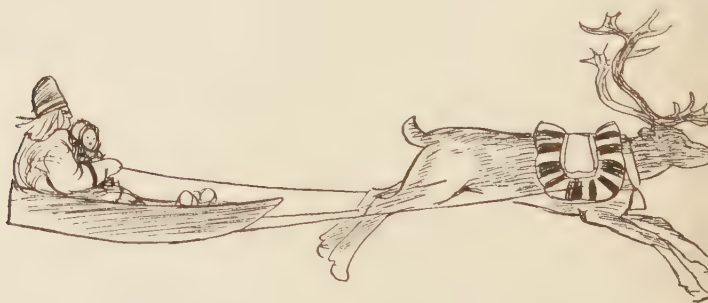




THE TWO LAPLANDS

AS children we dwell—
Every one—for a spell
In the “Lap-land” whose queen is our mother,
But the Lapland seen here
With its snow and its deer
Is, you understand clearly, another.

The reindeer of Lapland when roped to a sleigh
Will canter and trot like a horse all the day;
The milk of the reindeer is creamy and sweet;
The flesh of the reindeer is splendid to eat;





While most of the garments that Laplanders wear
Are cut from its hide or are spun from its hair.

“ And hence,” says the Lapp
(Who’s a squat little chap
Though without any wish to be larger),

“ You behold in that beast
Three creatures at least:
My cow, and my sheep, and my charger!”





WHEREVER WE GO

THE children who
In old Madrid
Are keen to do
As they are bid,
Are no more nu-
merous than you.

In fact—

We all are just alike, you know—
American or Eskimo,
Australian or Spanish—
We sometimes sulk, we sometimes cry,
And when we most are wanted, why,
Most certainly we vanish.





We none of us are over keen
To make ourselves supremely clean.
And whether Scotch or German,
'Tis probable on Sunday that
We'll slyly eat a chocolate,
Or giggle, in the sermon.

Why, children even in Cathay,
Although they dwell so far away,
And speak a language few do—
Each night exert their utmost power
To keep from bed another hour,
Precisley, dears, as you do.





THOUGHTS ON TUCK

WITH chocolate cream that you buy in the cake
Large mouthfuls and hurry are quite a mistake.

Wise persons prolong it as long as they can
By putting in practice this excellent plan:

The cream from the chocolate lining they dig
With a match from a match-box or clean little twig.

Some hundreds or thousands of scoopings they make
Before they've exhausted a threepenny cake;



And then, when the cream is all finished, there still
Is the chocolate lining to eat as they will.

With ices it's equally silly to haste:
You ought to go slowly and dwell on each taste.

Large mouthfuls are painful as well as unwise,
For they lead to an ache at the back of the eyes.



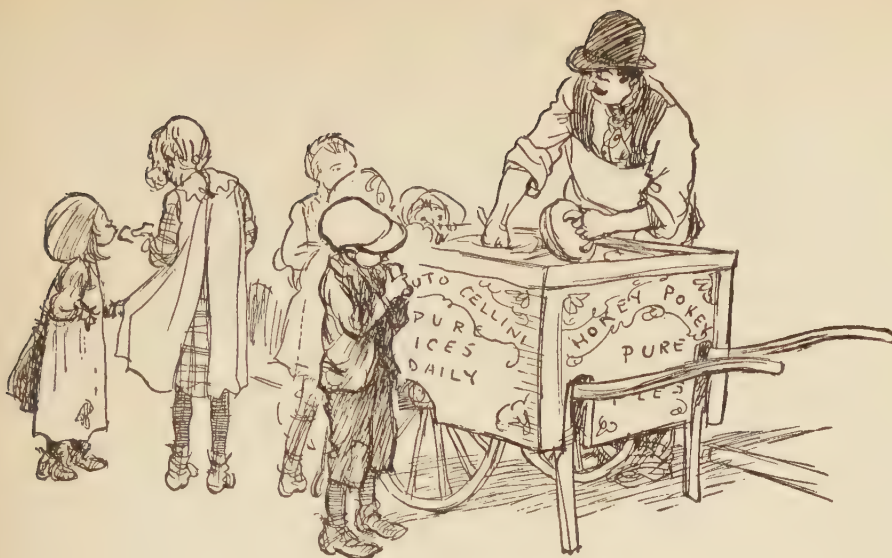


THE ORANGE

ON Saturday night in the London East End
Those children are grand who've a penny to spend,
For where farthings are riches, it's easy to tell
A penny is something tremendously swell.

Indeed you've no hint what a penny can buy
Until in the East End of London you try:
Why, a penny will *fill*, if expended aright,
And especially so on a Saturday night.





In winter roast chestnuts, in summer the ice,
Hokey-Pokey perhaps (which is frozen ground-rice),
The date and the fig are both popular there,
But the orange I think is the favourite fare.

An orange cut up and spread out on a plate
Is all very well for occasions of state,
But to make a small hole and to suck till it's done,
With both hands to squeeze it, is much better fun.



POTATOES

POTATOES on the table
 To eat with other things,
 Potatoes with their jackets off
 May do for dukes and kings.





But if you wish to taste them
As nature meant you should,
Be sure to keep their jackets on
And eat them in a wood.

A little salt and pepper,
A deal of open air,
And never was a banquet
That offered nobler fare.

But if the time is winter
There's still another plan:
You simply pay a penny to
The Hot Potato Man.

The children cluster round him
To catch a ray of heat.
"All 'ot," he cries, "and mealy,
And warm yer 'ands a treat!"

The best of food can weary
The best of appetite;
Potatoes with their jackets on
Are always, always right.



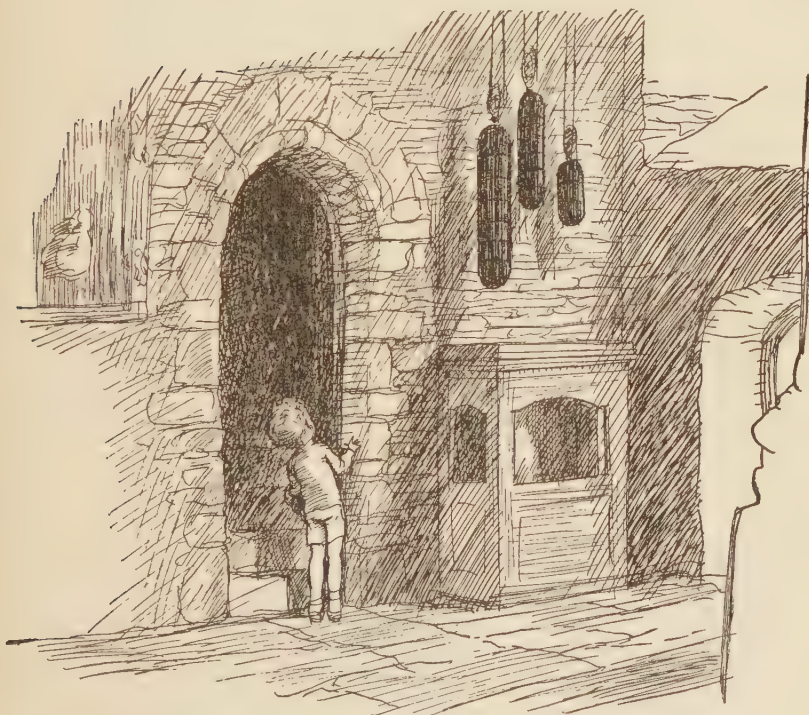
MR. COGGS

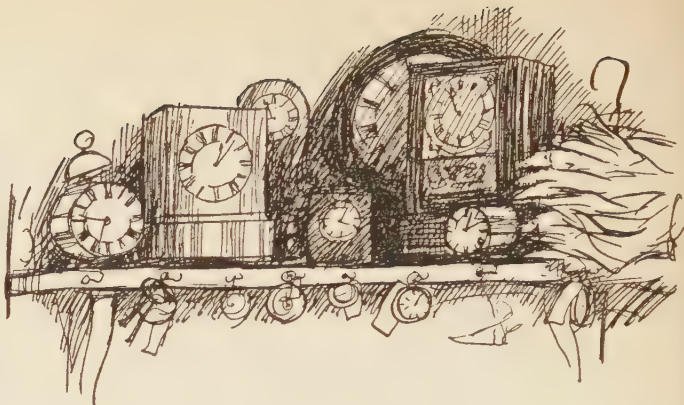
EVERY Monday at ten Mr. Coggs may be seen
On his way to examine the wheels
And wind the church clock up, that blessed machine
Which gives us the time for our meals.

To the usual key for the finger and thumb
His bears no resemblance at all;
It's more like that big one when visitors come,
And the dining-room table's too small.

The clock-loft is dusty, great spiders abound,
And mice scamper over the floor,
A bat now and then flutters blindly around,
And you hear, overhead, an owl snore.

Supposing we stay till eleven, each stroke
Seems to fill the whole world with its din,
As it signals to cook that her fire she must poke,
And be putting the round of beef in.





MR. COGGS AGAIN

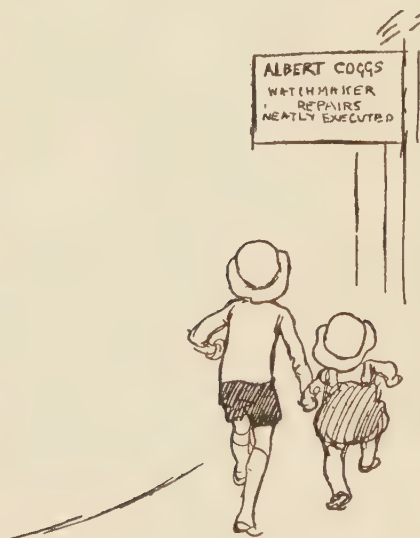
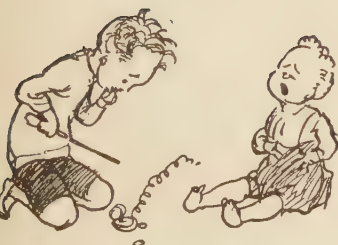
IF any of our watches stop
We haste to Mr. Coggs's shop,
For though to scold us he pretends,
He's quite among our special friends.

He fits a dice-box in his eye,
And takes a long and thoughtful spy,
And prods the wheels, and says, "Dear, dear!
More carelessness, I greatly fear!"





And then he lays the dice-box down
And frowns a most prodigious frown;
But if we ask him what's the time,
He'll make his gold repeater chime.





MR. PIPER

IT'S a terrible thing when a cockatoo dies,
But less, I've discovered, you suffer
If you bear it away without any delay
To old Mr. Piper, the stuffer.

In the matter of eyes Mr. Piper is glad
To have his opinion supported,
And we choose what would do for our poor cockatoo
From a box labelled "Birds' Eyes Assorted."



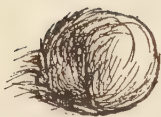
Then remember my words ; if a pet you should lose,
Your grief can be greatly diminished
If the stuffer is nice, and he asks your advice,
And you pop in and out till he's finished.





THE BULLFINCH

THE rabbit has a twitching nose
and bright and startled eye
(And when he happens to be white
his eye is pinky too),
But nothing will he do for you, how-
ever you may try,
Excepting eat, and eat, and eat, and
eat, his lifetime through.

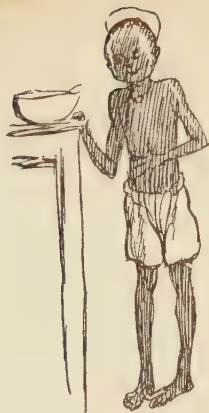


The squirrel is a lively little nervous
mass of fur,
Who frolics when he wishes, but
is difficult to tame;
The dormouse has attractions, but for
months he doesn't stir,
The silkworm is industrious, but
never plays a game.



The bullfinch, on the contrary, is full
of fun and cheek,
He'll hop among the breakfast
things and puff his rosy chest;
He'll nestle on your shoulder and
he'll kiss you with his beak,
And that is why the bullfinch is the
pet I love the best.





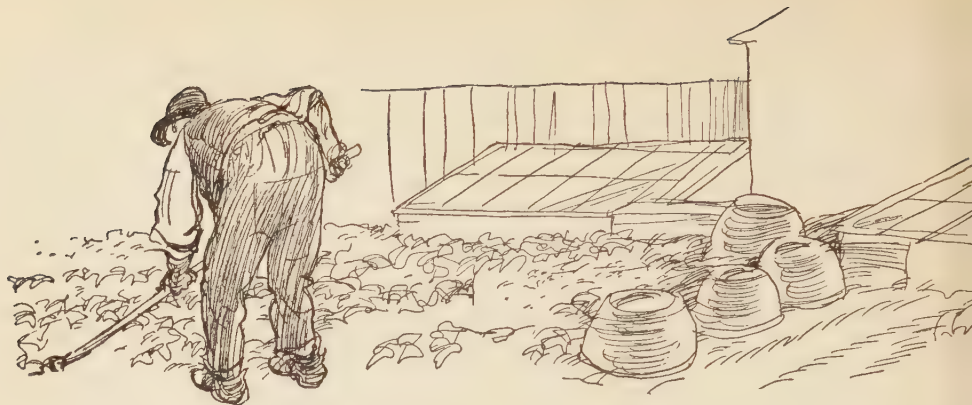
THE MILD HINDU

THOUGH you decline to think it nice,
The mild Hindu adores his rice,
And always hands his plate up twice.



So when you next the pudding view,
Suppress the customary "Pooh!"
And imitate the mild Hindu.





OLD JOHN

WHEN Father gave us each a plot,
“Don’t worry John,” he said,
“But sow your seeds, and pull your weeds
All by yourselves instead.”
To which we answered him, “Hear! Hear!
As if we’d let John interfere!”





But, somehow, though it's fun to watch
The way a flower grows,
And give away a big bouquet,
And fumigate a rose,
When weeds grow also, rank and thick,
Why, John is certainly a brick.

It never "worries" him, you know,
He's such a toilsome man;
We've but to ask, he leaves his task
And helps us all he can.
Why, John can weed for half a day
And never even think of play.



BILL HOOK, THE WOODMAN

WHEN there's frost in the air and all numb are your toes,
And scarlet your cheeks and your ears and your nose,
When the ice on the pond is a litter of stones,
And a hoop you must roll if you'd thaw out your bones;
When the ruts are like iron, the puddles like glass,
And the people you meet say "It's fresh" as they pass—
Why, then is the time when the woodman is swinging
His axe in the wood and its echoes are ringing.

As the tree falls to earth with the steel in its heart,
The handbill makes ready to furnish his part;
No livelier weapon is known to exist
Than a handbill held tight in a wood-cutter's fist.
He lops off the boughs as Eliza snips braid,
And flings them aside with a twist of the blade.



Then the branches in faggots together are bound,
To crackle on hearths when there's snow on the ground;
To crackle and hiss while the sap oozes forth,
And the tempest swirls down with a rush from the North.





MAKE-BELIEVE

THERE are so many girls and boys
In London who possess no toys,
But must instead, from morn till eve,
Do what they can with make-believe.

A lump of rag is all that Poll
Requires to make a perfect doll ;
A piece of knotted rope, a stick,
Are ball and bat enough for Dick.





But Polly's doll wins love as keen
As if she were a waxen queen;
And Dicky makes tremendous drives,
And runs his fours, and even fives.

And when these children cannot go
To see the great November Show,
They do not therefore mope and moan,
But make a Lord Mayor of their own.





THE HAPPY GIPSIES

THE ordinary merchant
Lives just as you or I;
His house is made of brick or stone,
His rooms are warm and dry;
And if we want his merchandise,
On foot or in a 'bus
We journey to his shop, because
His shop won't come to us.

But basket-making gipsies
Consider people more;
They harness horses to their house
And bring it to your door;
And in the shelter of the trees
It stands when day is done—
A kitchen, bedroom, workroom, shop,
And nursery in one.



The land is theirs to rove in,
From Cumberland to Kent,
Without the sameness of a street,
The weariness of rent—
They've every day another ride,
Another town to see,
And, in the shade beside the road,
Another picnic tea.





THE CONJUROR

WHEN I am a man and can do as I wish,
 With no one to say if I may,
 Although I'll play ball a little, and fish,
 I'll conjure for most of the day.

The conjuror's life is so easy and grand;
 He makes such superior jokes—
 Oh, it's splendid to stand with a wand in your hand,
 And puzzle relations and folks.





If eggs should be wanted, you turn to a friend,
 And draw two or three from his hair;
 If a rabbit is wished, and his hat he will lend,
 You wave, and, behold, Bunny is there!

To pestle-and-mortar gold watches, and then
 Return them as good as before—
 Why, that is a life for a King among men,
 The life I shall ever adore.



THE BUTCHER BOY

THE butcher boy of London,
He can't be very gay,
As on his tricycle he serves
His customers all day.
It's true he sometimes gets a tip,
And cooks are often kind,
But London streets are long and dull
And London squares confined.
And even at its cheerfullest
How tame a life has he
Beside the country's butcher boys
So merry and so free!





Upon a spanking pony,
His basket on his arm,
A gallop-trot, a gallop-trot,
He darts from farm to farm.
In lanes of honeysuckle,
A blot of blue, he's seen,
And on the broad white highway,
And on the village green;
The housewife gladly greets him,
He's quite a friend of Sue's,
For with the leg of mutton
He brings the morning's news.



THE VILLAGE SHOP

IN the town, where each shop's of a different kind,
 From one to another we fare;
 But in quaint little hamlets one only we find,
 And, O, what a mixture is there!



There are corduroy trousers, stove
 polish and pins,
 Tea, biscuits, new bonnets and
 lamps,
 There are shovels and watchchains,
 tomatoes in tins,
 And hymn-books and leggings and
 stamps.





There are tinctures for toothache, tin kettles and bread,
Squashed dates, Barcelonas, and nails,
There are ribbons and saucepans and treacle and thread,
Dress-patterns and rat-traps and pails.

There are buttons and cigarettes, bull's-eyes and balls,
Seed packets and popguns and rakes,
Dog-muzzles and butter, bananas and shawls,
Cheap novels and beehives and cakes.

And gossip goes on to a fearful extent,
Since customers shop at their ease;
And everything lives in the glorious scent
Of calico, bacon, and cheese.



THE PLOUGHMAN

ON winter mornings, when the air is still,
The ploughman's cries come floating down the hill,
Ge-e-e-e Up! Ge-e-e-e Whoa!
The selfsame sharp and throaty cries are they
That teamsters used in Julius Cæsar's day—
Ge-e-e-e Up! Ge-e-e-e Whoa!

Nothing is changed. Since tillage first began
The same brown earth has yielded food to man.



Nothing is changed—save ploughman, team and share:
Ten thousand furrows have been made just there;

And every time, with cautious, sidelong looks,
Have followed, close behind, the greedy rooks.

And every time the team was kept in hand
By those two potent phrases of command—

Ge-e-e-e Up! Ge-e-e-e Whoa!

Which every horse on earth can understand
From Christiana to Van Diemen's Land,

Ge-e-e-e Up! Ge-e-e-e Whoa!





OUR BLACKSMITH

OUR blacksmith is a stronger man
Than any in the town;
At lifting weights and bending bars
He has immense renown;
And no one disagrees with him,
Because he knocks them down.

His muscles are terrific! Why,
I'll tell you what he'll do:
He'll let you bind his straightened arm
So tight it turns it blue,
And then he'll bend his elbow up
And snap the cords in two.



He never learned to read or write
Or do the simplest sums.
But what of that? He'll take a stone
And bite it into crumbs,
Or even break a dime between
His fingers and his thumbs.

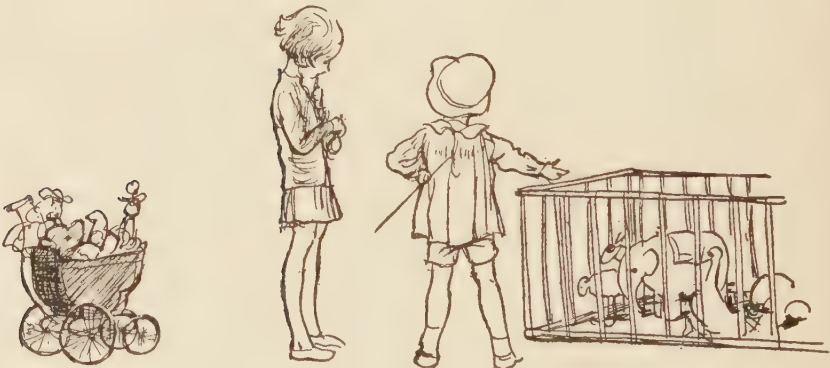
He never does a single thing
That copy-books extol,
But if he wants to light his pipe
He picks a glowing coal—
For nothing hurts his horny hand—
And holds it to the bowl.





MARKET DAY

HOORAY! Hooray! it's market day!
 Let's watch it all instead of play.
 No matter where you walk you meet
 Some flustered creature in the street.
 The men so wave their arms and shout
 That bullocks cannot help but doubt—
 Poor worried bullocks always yearning
 For any but the proper turning;
 Poor frightened flocks of sheep whose flurry
 Confounds all chauffeurs in a hurry.



The farmers stand in twos and threes,
Or gossip over bread and cheese,
And show each other bags of grain
And shake their heads about the rain.
The farmers' wives, red-faced and smart,
Descend in grandeur from the cart,
And vanish through the draper's door,
And never re-appear till four.
The market place is full of stalls
Of gingerbread and brandy balls,
As well as things one never needs,
Like calico and tracts and seeds.
And all the time the cattle low,
The sheep "Baa, Baa," the roosters crow,
And someone says, where'er you stay,
"Now then, my boy, you're in the way!"





THE FISHERMAN

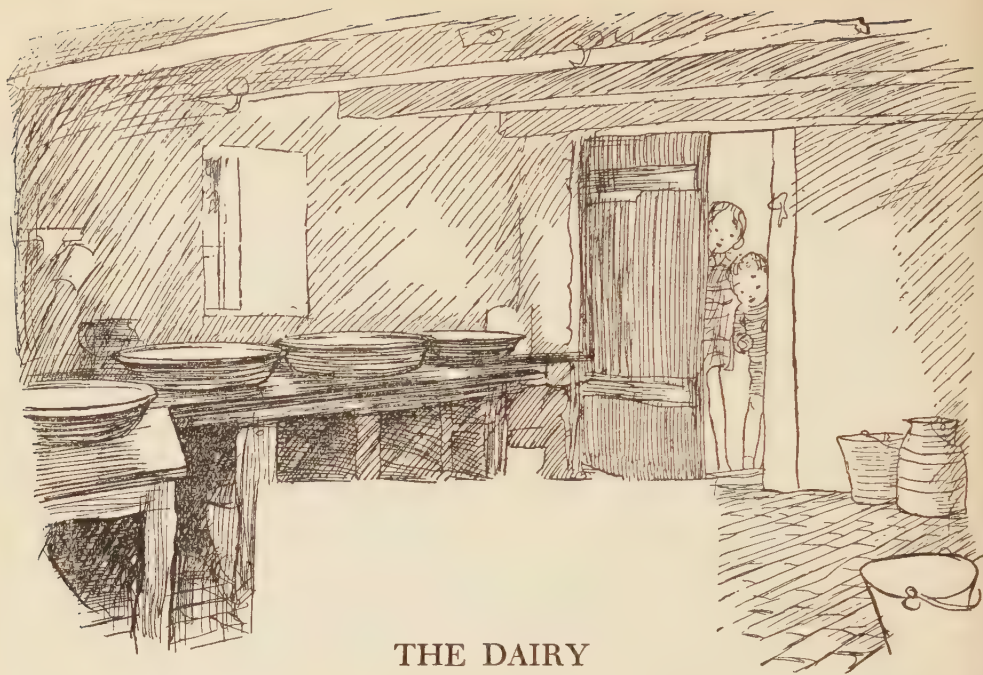
HOW glad the fisherman must be.
We go each summer to the sea
And do the best we can all day
To drive his loneliness away!
We're always pleased to lend a hand
To pull-ahoy his boat to land,
And, though it makes us very wet,
To help him with his shrimping net.





To be a shrimper is indeed
A most exciting life to lead:
For every day he paddles twice,
Excepting when it's cold as ice;
And all he catches he can sell
Directly and extremely well;
Moreover as he's rather old,
No nurses bother him or scold.





THE DAIRY

WHEN summer's heat has reached its height
 And o'er the ground the air's a-quiver,
 When lemonade is our delight
 And cows stand knee-deep in the river;
 The dairy even then is cool
 As any darksome, fern-fringed pool.

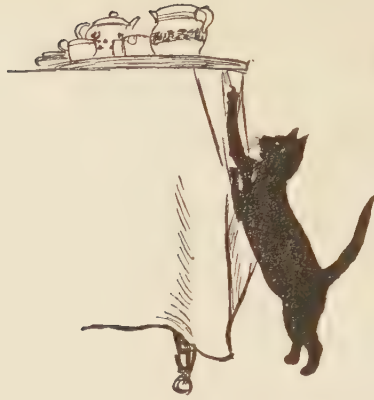
Though Father Sun would love to play
 Among those shallow red-brick dishes,
 For once he fails to have his way,
 The dairyman defies his wishes;
 Both door and shaded windows cry,
 "No ray of sunshine need apply."



The sun is not the only foe
To milk and cheese and cream and butter:
A certain quadruped I know,
Who sets canaries in a flutter,
Has also to be watched with care—
“Hi! Turn that pussy out of there!”

Both sun and puss may interfere
At ordinary times with pleasure,
But when the strawberries are here
We want thick cream and fullest measure.
Then urge your cows, O dairyman,
To do, in June, the best they can.





THE NATURE OF THE CAT

I. HER GREED

TO get at milk a cat will do
A hundred things she oughtn't to;
But if it's cream she wants, why then
She'll multiply those sins by ten.





II. HER CRUELTY

Of all the cruel things there are
A cat is cruellest by far.
While other creatures kill outright,
To persecute is her delight.
So when you hear that Pussy's prey
Successfully has got away,
You should enthusiastic be,
And ask for gingerbread for tea.





III. HER CONSCIENCE

A dog will often steal a bone,
But conscience lets him not alone,
And by his look his guilt is known.

But cats consider theft a game,
And, howsoever you may blame,
Give not the slightest sign of shame.

When food mysteriously goes,
The chances are that Pussy knows
More than she leads you to suppose.





IV. HER SLEEPLESSNESS

By Nature's laws
The dog bow-wows,
The ass hee-haws,
The cat miaous.

The worst miaous
Occur at night,
When cats carouse
With all their might.

A cat miaous
Upon the tiles
In twenty thou-
sand different styles.





BLACK COCKER SPANIELS

OF all the dogs that are so sweet,
The spaniel is the most complete;
Of all the spaniels, dearest far
The little loving Cockers are.



They're always merry, always hale;
Their eyes are like October ale;
They are so loyal and so black;
So unresentful 'neath the whack;

They never sulk, they never tire;
They love the field, they love the fire;
They never criticize their friends;
Their every joy all joy transcends.





The Aberdeen is quaint and sly,
A harvest of the anxious eye;
The Bedlington is blue and true;
The Airedale fights till death for you;

The Bob-tail is a jolly chap;
The Pekingese commands your lap;
The Dachshund (with the Queen Anne legs)
Your sympathy enchains or begs.



Yet why compare? All dogs on earth
Possess some special charm and worth.
But Cocker spaniels? Every way,
They are the kennel's angels, *they*.



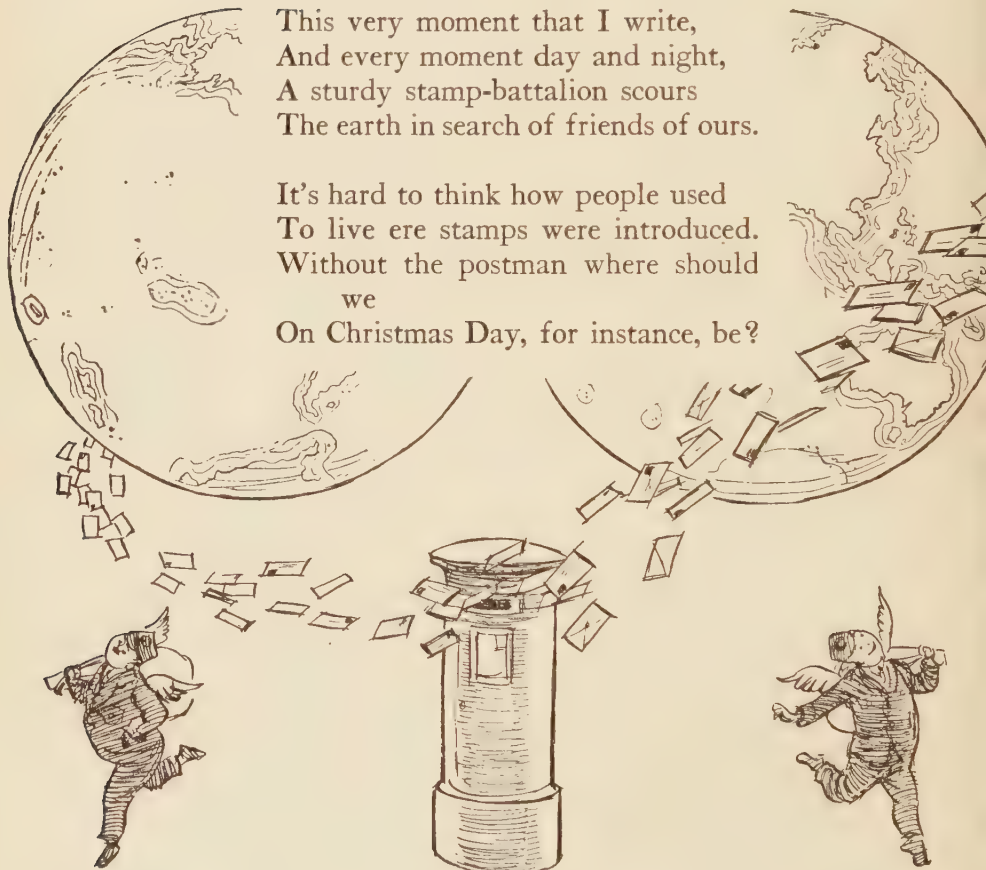


LETTERS AND PARCELS

A STAMP'S a tiny, flimsy thing,
No thicker than a beetle's wing,
And yet 'twill roam the world for
you
Exactly where you tell it to.

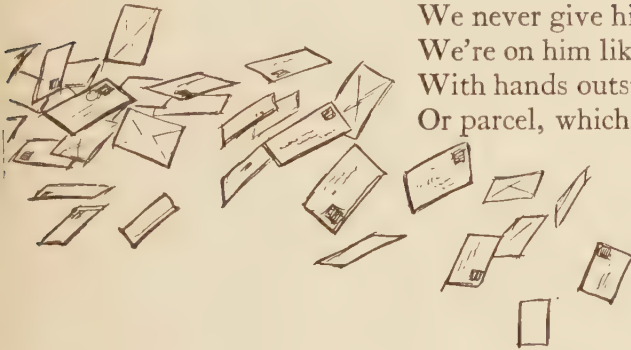
This very moment that I write,
And every moment day and night,
A sturdy stamp-battalion scours
The earth in search of friends of ours.

It's hard to think how people used
To live ere stamps were introduced.
Without the postman where should
we
On Christmas Day, for instance, be?

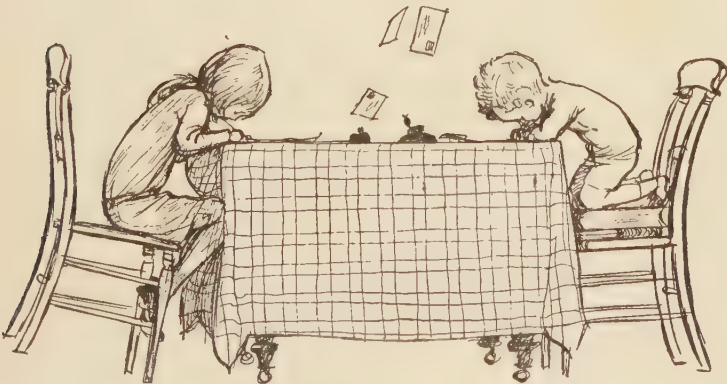




On Christmas Day beneath his load
Our postman staggers on his road;
Instead of reaching us at eight,
He's very often three hours late.



We never give him time to rap,
We're on him like a thunder-clap,
With hands outstretched for card or letter,
Or parcel, which, of course, is better.





CRUSTY BREAD



THE country is the place for milk,
All creamy, with a head;
And butter fresh as fresh can be,
And bread to spread it on at tea—
The finest bread you'll ever see,
The really crusty bread.

What, don't you know the country crust?
Come, come, you must!
Not know the country, crunchy crust—
How crisp it is and sweet it is,
Magnificent to eat it is,
Impossible to beat it is?
Why, sure you must!
You must!





THE TURKEY

AT Christmas time the Poulterer's is all a blaze of gas,
With rows on rows of turkeys that will strut the farm no more,
The shopman smooths his apron and assures the folks who pass
That never was such plump and pleasing poultry seen before.

I'm sorry for the turkey, yet the fault's his own, I fear,
For had he kept his counsel he'd have grown an older bird;
But having bade us "Gobble! Gobble! Gobble!" all the year
He can't complain, at Christmas, if we take him at his word.





STORY BOOKS

IN summer, in the sunlight,
The open air is best,
And playthings are neglected,
And stories have a rest.
But when the dreary winter comes,
With foggy days and rain,
The hearthrug and the bookshelves call
Their patrons back again.



O then for Ali Baba,
O then for Jackanapes,
Dolittle, Mowgli, Moby Dick,
And Tarzan of the Apes;
For Little Claus and Little Men,
Man Friday and Legree,
For Hereward and Hercules,
Tom Brown and Tweedledee.



HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

ERE Christmas can be everything
That Christmas ought to be—
The fullest kind of joy to bring
To you (and also me)—
In every country of the earth
Good folk must work for all they're worth.





How many nations toiled to make
The Dinner, who can say?
(One does not want one's head to ache
Too much on Christmas Day)—
But think about it as you wait
For Caroline to fill your plate.

Just take the pudding. Ere it comes,
Our appetites to seal,
Dark Greeks have had to find the plums,
Italians the peel;
The flour is from Canadian fields,
While Demerara sugar yields.

Again, brave sailors must pursue
And kill a mighty whale—
In peril lest he dash in two
Their vessel with his tail—
Before the Christmas candle-flames
Can shine upon our merry games.

It is an interesting thought,
This toiling far and near,
In every land some labour wrought
To make our Christmas cheer,
And steamers tossed on every sea
To bring good things for you and me.



UNCLE BEN

SOME people make collections
Of fossils, eggs, and ferns,
Of coins and stamps and butterflies,
And other things by turns.

But Uncle Ben is different
From every one you'll meet.
For he collects the penny toys
They sell you in the street.

Wherever crowds are thickest
These merchants stand all day,
With every kind of "novelty"
Spread out upon a tray.

And Uncle takes his business bag
And buys from every one,
Though once he bought a running mouse
And couldn't make it run.





A CHRISTMAS CAROL

TWO men must be named who have never as yet
Been properly thanked by a world in their debt;
Two toilers without whose assiduous zeal
The warmth of our hearts would be bound to congeal
Our generous promptings be fated to slumber,
And the giving of presents become a back number.





“Who are they?” you ask, “for their praise we must sing.”

Well, the one makes brown paper, the other makes string.

(All together)

Paper and string!

Paper and string!

O, where should we be when the Christmas bells ring

If it weren't for supplies of brown paper and string?





IN BRITTANY

IN Brittany the churches
All day are open wide,
That anyone who wishes to
May pray or rest inside.
The priests have rusty cassocks,
The priests have shaven chins,
And poor old bodies go to them
With lists of little sins.

In Brittany the churches
Are cool and white and quaint,
With here and there a crucifix
And here and there a saint;
And here and there a little shrine,
With candles short or tall
That Bretons light for love of Him
The Lord Who loveth all.









